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FAITH, HOPE, AND FAITHFULNESS

Richard Creel

James Muyskens argues that religious *hope* is by itself, without the support of evidence or faith, sufficient for an authentic religious life. I agree. He portrays religious *faith* as an epistemically secure attitude that is highly subject to exaggeration and delusion and that evokes a kind of relaxed confidence which is incompatible with the inward intensity of a mature religious life. I disagree and argue that religious hope and religious faith are compatible, religious faith can be epistemically astute, religious faith is an appropriate object of religious hope, and religious hope fortified by religious faith produces joyful hope.

James Muyskens has done valuable, pioneering work on the concept of religious hope. I think his essay *The Sufficiency of Hope* should be required reading for every seminarian and every philosopher of religion.¹ I am less sanguine regarding what he says about religious faith.² He pits the life of religious hope and the life of religious faith against one another as though they are incompatible. He says that we must choose between "the vision of religious life as an uncertain venture requiring unrequited striving, courage, personal resolve against all odds," on the one hand, and, on the other hand, "the vision of cosmic security with its attendant sense of well-being, world order, tranquility." He depicts the former type of life as being based on hope and the latter on faith. He thinks the religious life based on faith is not epistemically respectable and that, therefore, we should choose a life of hope over a life of faith—though he adds that, "If the tranquility and cosmic security required [for a religious life based on faith] could be gained without conceptual cheating, without violating reasonable cognitive constraints, without losing the passionate commitment of a genuinely religious life, without inconsistency, then, very probably, it ought to be preferred."³

It seems to me that such emotional security can be enjoyed in this life within the bounds of reason—although, as Kant pointed out, in the mode of faith, not of certain knowledge. Yet faith need not be *preferred* to hope, as faith and hope are not mutually exclusive and can benefit one another—a possibility that Muyskens does not explore. Consider a person who enjoys both propositional religious faith and propositional religious hope and who is philosophically astute. She realizes that her confidence that that is true which she hopes is true is of the nature of faith, not of certain knowledge or



even of evidentially justified belief. She thinks that her religious convictions are profoundly insecure epistemically, and yet she is blessed with emotional assurance that what she hopes is true is true—even as most of us are blessed with confidence that we are what we seem and are not brains in a vat.⁴ Hence, a life of religious hope can be fortified by faith; we need not choose between them.

Muyskens also makes a mistake, I think, about the biblical view of faith and hope. “In the biblical view,” he writes, “faith is logically prior to hope” (136). In support of this claim he quotes Thomas Aquinas, who said, “It is thus apparent that faith comes before hope” (137).⁵ Muyskens made these statements by way of justifying his claim that the Bible has things backwards when it claims that faith precedes hope. Rather, he claims, hope precedes faith; not *vice versa*. Because of an ambiguity that Muyskens seems to miss, I think he is right in what he wants to affirm and wrong in what he wants to deny.

Muyskens wants to affirm that hope is a sufficient foundation for a sincere and focused religious life; he insists that faith is not, as many think, a necessary condition for the living of an authentic religious life.⁶ I think Muyskens is profoundly correct that hope is a sufficient basis for a sincere religious life, but I think he is wrong that the biblical point of view places faith *logically* prior to hope—except in the following instance, which I shall explain in relation to his reference to Aquinas.

Aquinas is not speaking of religious hope on its most general level when he says that faith is prior to hope; he is speaking of the hope of a-person-of-faith for personal salvation. His point is that it is only after one has been given faith in the reality and goodness of God that one can begin to hope that the God *in whom one now has faith* will forgive one’s sins and accept one into his kingdom. That seems correct.

Along this same line St. Paul says in Romans 5:1-2: “Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.” Clearly the hope of which St. Paul is speaking is the hope of people who have the gift of faith that in Christ God made it possible for them to be reconciled to him and to enter into glory with him and, who, on the basis of that faith, hope that they will enter into such glory.⁷ This relation between confidence and hope can be illustrated also from media stories about certain would-be refugees from East Germany in October, 1989. Having fled from East Germany to Hungary, they waited anxiously under guard in Hungary, not knowing whether they would be returned to East Germany or allowed to go legally to West Germany. Eventually they were assured that a train was coming to make it possible for some of them to travel legally to West Germany; however, they were told that

the train would not be able to take everyone. On the basis of their confidence that such a train was coming, they then began to hope *as individuals* that they would be among those who were taken. Clearly, it was only after they had confidence that a train was coming to take some of them to West Germany that they could begin to hope that they, as individuals, would be among those who were taken. However, if, without having any reason to expect a rescue train, one of those individuals had begun to hope that a rescue train would come, then in that case hope would have preceded confidence—just as hope can precede faith in the religious case.

Faith can, then, precede and ground hope, and it is understood to do so in some biblical statements. But Muyskens is not correct in saying without qualification that, “In the biblical view, faith is logically prior to hope.” The author of Hebrews 11:1, for example, is quite explicit that faith is the assurance of things hoped for.⁸ This entails that faith, at least sometimes, is logically subsequent to hope, not antecedent to it. That is, sometimes first we hope; then we receive emotional assurance that what we hope for is true.

St. Peter provides another example of religious hope functioning independently of faith when he bids Christians to “Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you” (I Peter 3:15). It seems clear from context that St. Peter’s immediate reference was to the hope of Christians that Jesus is the Christ, but there seems every reason to think that if he did not have logically deeper hopes in mind at the time, such as that Jesus was God incarnate or that there is a God, that he would have readily included those among the hopes for which Christians should be ready to account. Of course, for the Christian to account for her hope by an appeal to her faith would be to the non-believer, to whom one is supposed to be giving an account, no account at all, so surely that was not what St. Peter was asking Christians to do.⁹ That suggests that St. Peter recognized that Christian hope is not necessarily dependent on Christian faith and can be defended independently of an appeal to Christian faith—contrary to what Muyskens claims.

Notice also how differently we proceed in defending what we hope is the case as distinguished from what we have faith is the case. We defend what we hope is the case by referring to what we judge to be its goodness. We hope it is true because we believe it would be good were it true. A defense of one’s faith would proceed quite differently—if such a defense is intelligible. After all, faith that *p* is very like or identical to a basic belief that *p*, and what it means for a belief to be basic is that it is not held because of evidential considerations; consequently, it would be misleading at best and incoherent at worst to try to give an evidential defense of it.

Finally, consider the response of the apostles on the road to Emmaus when they encountered the risen Christ without recognizing him. Jesus asked them,

"What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" They told Jesus, whom they still did not recognize, that they were talking of Jesus of Nazareth, "who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people," but who had been condemned and crucified by the authorities. The apostles added: "we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:13-21). Notice, the apostles did not say, "We had *faith* that he was the one to redeem Israel;" they said they had *hoped* that he was the redeemer of Israel—though it is possible, of course, that they also had *faith*, along with their hope, that Jesus was the Christ. Again, it seems, we have a biblical episode which shows that Muyskens is wrong in claiming that, "In the biblical view, faith is logically prior to hope."

There is not, however, an absolute priority of hope over faith. In the life of an individual, either might come first, or they might occur simultaneously. As an example of faith preceding hope, consider that a person might grow up confident that there is a God but then come to realize that her confidence is of the nature of faith rather than of certain knowledge or justified belief. Because of that realization, she might subsequently begin to hope that her faith is veridical. (It would, of course, also be possible for such a person to be indifferent to the content of her faith or to hope that it is false—depending on whether she is pleased, displeased, or indifferent about that which she has faith is the case.)

Alternatively, especially in our era of indifference and hostility toward religion, a person might grow up without faith that there is a God and might even believe that evidence favors the non-existence of God yet begin to hope that the evidence is significantly incomplete or has been misunderstood and that there is a God; this same person might later acquire faith that there is a God even though she continues to think that the evidence with which she is familiar favors the non-existence of God.

I think, then, that Muyskens is right and wrong when he says that "a life of faith would not be possible if we were certain that God does *not* exist or if we believed that He does not. Such belief is incompatible with faith" (48). If by "a life of faith" Muyskens means, as I think he does, "a life of *faithfulness* to God," i.e., a life of endeavor to do the will of God and to be in a right relationship with God, then he is correct that we could not live a life of faithfulness directed to God as our intentional object if we were certain that God does not exist. We cannot coherently endeavor to achieve and maintain a right relationship with someone whom we are certain does not exist.¹⁰ However, Muyskens is incorrect to add that we could not lead such a life if we merely *believed* that God does not exist (as distinguished from thinking that we *know for certain* that God does not exist).¹¹ If the evidence against the existence of God of which one is aware is not thought to be conclusive, that leaves one free to have faith and/or hope that God exists, and to endeavor

to live, on the basis of that faith and/or hope, as though God exists, in the faith and/or hope that the reasons for thinking that he does not exist are misleading.

Consider a parallel. Coretta King, the gifted wife of the late Martin Luther King, Jr., has since his death been devoted to the work for which he is widely revered. What if Rev. King had been kidnapped rather than assassinated, and what if subsequent evidence had indicated by all reasonable standards that he had almost certainly been killed by his kidnappers. His wife, Coretta, could *believe*, i.e., be convinced on the basis of evidence, that he was dead, yet in hope that he was not, she could live a life of faithfulness to him, i.e., she could endeavor to live her life such that were he in fact alive and returned to her, he would see that she had been profoundly faithful to him and to his dream of a better world.

When the principle involved in the preceding example is applied to theism, it generates Kierkegaard's point that our most fundamental task as humans is to live our lives so that if what we hope to be true is true, we will have lived our lives appropriately—e.g., so that if we hope that there is a God and that Jesus was God incarnate, that God/Jesus will look approvingly on how we have endeavored to live our lives. Clearly, Kierkegaard would not have agreed that *he* believed, i.e., had evidentially based confidence, that God exists, yet he endeavored to live a religiously faithful life. Indeed, he is often referred to as a paradigm of the religiously faithful person. In brief, someone who hopes against hope that there is a God, i.e., who hopes against a negative but not probative balance of evidence that there is a God, can also live a life devoted to God—or at least *meant* to be devoted to God—and what else can we do in this life in which we do not know for certain that God exists except endeavor to live our lives in ways that we think and hope will be approved by God if he does exist?

My point that a life devoted to God is a life that is *meant* to be devoted to God but might not be, calls for distinctions between faith-that, faith-in, and faithfulness. Faith-that and faith-in are relational concepts. In "faith that" the relata are the one who has faith, the proposition that is the object of one's faith, and the property of truth, which one is non-evidentially confident the proposition has. Whether one actually has faith that God exists is conceptually unaffected by whether God exists.

"Faith in" is not conceptually independent of existence. The relata of "faith in" are the one who has faith, the person or thing in which one has faith, and some property that the one who has faith is non-evidentially confident is possessed by that person or thing. One can have faith *that* something exists, but one has faith *in* only something that one thinks *does* exist. It would be odd to say, "I have faith *in* the existence of God." Rather, we have faith *that* God exists, and we have faith *in* the goodness or power of God.

One can have faith *that* something exists which does not exist, but one can have faith *in* only something that does exist—though one can think one has faith in something that, unbeknownst to one, does not in fact exist. If I said, “I have faith in Boris Yeltsin’s ability to save Russia and its neighbors from starvation and anarchy this winter,” and you convinced me by an authoritative document that he had died, it would be a conceptual confusion for me to say, “Well, I still have faith in him.” Rather, I should say, “Well, I would have faith in him if he were still alive.” This shows that it is possible to have the intention of having faith in someone even when it is not possible to actually have faith in him because he no longer exists (or never did exist—as with the Easter Bunny and the Tooth Fairy). This means, of course, that if there is no God, then no one has ever had faith in God, though many people have thought they did and many think they do.

Now let’s look at faith-in and faithfulness. Faith-in is a disposition concept; faithfulness is an action concept. Faith-in need not have expressed itself in action; faithfulness seems to require that one have intentionally acted on a commitment and be resolved to continue acting on that commitment. Typically, faithfulness to God consists of honoring the name of God and conscientiously seeking to do the will of God. For a person of positive faith, it consists of acting on the content of her faith. But, of course, a person who is not a theist out of faith but is a theist out of mere hope or only on the basis of evidence can be *faithful* in the sense of conscientiously endeavoring to do what she thinks God wills or would will that she do. If there is not a God, then, of course, no one is living a life faithful to God or devoted to God or based on faith in God. If God does not exist, then I cannot be faithful to God—though in my ignorance of his non-existence I can mean to be faithful to God, and even think that I am.

If One Has Hope, Then Why Want Faith?

One can, then, hope to be saved by God even if one does not believe or have faith that there is a God. One can hope both that there *is* a God and that God will *save* one from sin and death, and one can endeavor to live in the light of that hope—“without violating reasonable cognitive constraints.” But if that is the case, and if hope is a sufficient foundation for the living of a religious life, then is religious faith otiose for one who has religious hope? Thomas Merton thought not. Merton, who after years of struggle with religious doubts became a Trappist monk, reports in *The Seven Storey Mountain* that while he was still waxing hot and cold toward religion he attended a worship service. During the service, he says, “when it came time to say the Apostle’s Creed, I stood up and said it, with the rest [of the congregation], hoping within myself that God would give me the grace someday to really believe it.”¹² Clearly, Merton was hoping for faith that the Apostle’s Creed is true. But if

one *hopes* that the Apostle's Creed, or some other set of religious propositions, is true, and if one endeavors to live in the light of that hope, and if, as Muyskens argues and I agree, a religious life can be lived on the basis of such hope, i.e., if one can be religiously faithful on the basis of hope alone, then why be concerned, as Merton was, to also have faith—especially if, as Muyskens warns, faith is neither knowledge nor evidentially justified belief but is easily confused with both and is highly subject to exaggeration and delusion?

The answer, I think, is that the state of mere hope, even though its object is religious, can feel cold, empty, and desperate. It seems obvious that it would be better to feel warm, full, and confident. Therefore it seems virtually impossible to be indifferent to those negative emotions, and it seems natural to want to feel otherwise. Indeed, it seems reasonable to think that religious hope itself would lead us to desire religious faith—as I think it did in Merton's case—though, of course, it should lead us to desire religious faith that is not exaggerated or deluded.

The preceding sentiments seem contained in part in a popular hymn by Hugh T. Kerr, "God of Our Life, Through All the Circling Years." Kerr writes: "Lead us by faith to hope's true promised land; Be thou our guide. With thee to bless, the darkness shines as light, And faith's fair vision changes into sight."¹³ This hymn is a prayer for faith that what one hopes for is true. Hope is in part a *vision*, e.g., of the promised land and how to get there; faith is *confidence* that that vision is truthful.¹⁴ When we are travelling dangerous, unfamiliar territory, the journey is less traumatic and more gratifying if we are confident of our map. Faith is, or at least can be, confidence in what is mapped out by hope—and the map of hope may, of course, be provided by divine revelation, rather than human speculation.

There is a saying that "It is better to journey in hope than to arrive." That is true if every destination will disappoint us. In such a case there might be wisdom in pausing to rest or smell the flowers, but not in stopping. However, if there is a God, then there is a destination that will not disappoint us—a destination at which it would be better to arrive than merely to anticipate hopefully or pass through quickly. It might be described as personal knowledge of God, or, in Thomistic terms, "the vision of God." Positive religious faith involves confident enjoyment of—not merely awareness of the possibility of, but confident enjoyment of—that destination by description, even if not yet by acquaintance.¹⁵

Hope, by contrast, has the texture of imagination, not perception. As a consequence it cannot give the same richness to religious life as can faith (and, of course, mere propositional faith cannot give the same richness of texture to religious life as can religious experience).¹⁶ Consider, for example, the difference between the feeling of anguished *hope* that a startling letter is

from one's long lost, beloved sibling, long thought to be dead, but indicated by the letter to be alive, and the feeling of *faith* that the letter is authentic—faith which realizes intellectually that it might be mistaken but which is nonetheless suffused with conviction that the letter is authentic.¹⁷ Surely such propositional faith is a happier state of mind than is the state of mere hope, and, if its propositional content is true, it is to be preferred to mere hope that the same content is true. Hope is grape juice; faith is wine.

It seems true also that at least sometimes in difficult situations faith gives us the composure to think more clearly and the strength of will to persevere longer and more vigorously than we could without it. Also, faith gives us poise and is, therefore, more effective than mere hope at keeping fear and desperation from miscuing or paralyzing action. Faith instills confidence, peace, strength, fortitude; it fortifies hope and enables action. The desirability of such things makes the desirability of faith seem obvious when it is combined with epistemic openness and honesty, as I believe it can be.¹⁸

Does Faith Detract From Religious Intensity?

Muyskens thinks that these benefits of religious faith generate a relaxed confidence which is not compatible with the intensity of inwardness that characterizes a mature religious life, so he prefers religion based on hope to religion based on faith (137). Because of my understanding of faith, I think his dichotomy is unnecessary and unfortunate. Anguished hope that the Gospel be true, hope that is anguished because so much seems to be shouting that the Gospel is false, is certainly a form of religious intensity which indicates that the hoper loves God and is not merely going along with what a flow of evidence seems to indicate (as an evidentialist theist might do). However, *joyful* faith that the Gospel is true is a clear indication of love of God because it implies that if one were to lose one's faith, one would be distraught and would hope desperately that the content of one's former faith is true even though one no longer enjoys subjective assurance of its truth.

Further, religion based on faith is not religion on the cheap, as Muyskens suggests it is. There are equal demands on the person of faith and the person of hope for faithfulness, i.e., for loyalty to the object of one's religious commitment. Further, hope and faith can be thought to be in the same boat evidentially, i.e., are equally precarious epistemically.

Regarding epistemic insecurity, Muyskens, taking his cue from Kierkegaard, emphasizes the objective uncertainty of the Gospel and adds that religious hope recognizes this objective uncertainty and so is motivated to commitment by love of the object of hope, not by mere confidence that it exists. I want to point out that faith, too, is characterized by objective uncertainty. Faith is subjective confidence that is not grounded evidentially.

To be sure, faith *can* be accompanied by evidence in its support, but it need

not be. When it is not, then it is no more epistemically secure than is hope.¹⁹ The philosophically sensitive person whose religious hope becomes buoyed by faith realizes that she is *still* suspended over 70,000 fathoms of water, epistemically speaking; her deep confidence that she will survive this situation does nothing to remove her awareness of the objective uncertainties and dangers of the situation. Nor does faith necessarily keep her from being battered by waves of negative evidence—but it does keep her from fearing that she will drown in them.

Faith, then, makes the emotional life of the believer more positive, more bearable. It is easier to keep struggling against the waves when one is confident that help is coming. Faith is the salt, the life-jacket, the buoyancy in the 70,000 leagues of water over which the person of faith is suspended, and she is deeply grateful for that buoyancy (and all the more grateful if earlier she had to struggle, perhaps for decades, in non-buoyant waters or with no life-jacket), but at every moment she realizes the possible precariousness of her situation—the water may suddenly lose its buoyancy, or the life-jacket may tear off, or a shark may come along and snap off her legs.

Hence, faith does not entail naive confidence. The faith which happens to one, which seems to come as a gift, is not necessarily deluded faith; it does not necessarily mistake itself for certain knowledge or evidentially justified belief. Indeed, in philosophically astute theistic faith resides one of those exhilarating paradoxes in which Kierkegaard revelled, for in such faith there is profound subjective confidence that God is real and good and wise and powerful, while at the same time there is, or at least can be, a clear sense that there is enormous objective evidence that reality is indifferent at best and hostile at worst to human well-being. Hence, astute faith does nothing to take the edge off the objective uncertainty of its metaphysical content.²⁰ Unfortunately, some people do not have such an epistemically discriminating understanding of faith, so they mislead others into thinking that faith is dogmatic or confused; yet other people, subconsciously disturbed by the objective uncertainty of their faith, shield themselves from awareness of that uncertainty by papering over it with a bogus seal of evidential approval.²¹

Muyskens concedes toward the end of *Sufficiency* that one who subscribes to his theology of hope rather than to a theology of faith can live a life of religious hope and faithfulness, but not of “joyous expectation” (139). After all, theistic hope differs from theistic faith by wanting but not expecting what faith expects. However, I think Muyskens is selling short what a theology of hope can encompass. To be sure, a theology of hope cannot *bestow* faith upon anyone—but neither can a theology of faith; faith is a gift of grace, not of theology.²² But a theology of hope can encompass the possibility, legitimacy, and desirableness of faith among the many things included in the scope of Christian hope. When religious hope *is* suffused with religious faith, the result

is joyful hope—which is more than the mere-hope that Muyskens seems to think is all that a theology of hope can accommodate. Moreover, such faith-filled hope would generate joyful expectation, e.g., of the coming of the Kingdom for which one hopes. The joy of such an expectation would arise from faith rather than evidence—though I do not mean to exclude the possibility that the same joyful expectation *might* arise from an examination of evidence and therefore be enjoyed in the mode of belief rather than faith.

Religious hope can, then, be fortified by faith. When it is, one's mere hope becomes joyful hope, enabling one to bob about optimistically over 70,000 leagues of stormy water while well aware at each moment that one's sense of indestructibility could be shattered in the next moment. That is the miracle wrought by the gift of religious faith, of unsinkable confidence that there is a God who is infinitely wise, good, and powerful. It is this kind of confidence that St. Paul captured so powerfully when he wrote to Christians being persecuted in Rome: "I am sure that neither death, nor life...nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39). Faith, then, enables its recipient to be emotionally confident while remaining intellectually honest in epistemically difficult circumstances.²³ Joyful hope, i.e., hope suffused by positive faith, is perhaps the most that we can reasonably hope for in this life in which, as St. Paul pointed out, we are destined to see things—but through a glass darkly. Fortunately such joyful hope seems in all ways adequate for the proper appreciation and living of this life.

The upshot of the preceding reflections is that Muyskens' theology of hope is not adequate to the New Testament, for one of the primary aims of the New Testament, in addition to providing what Muyskens describes as "a sense of the direction of life, of its meaning and purpose," is to show that a sense of "cosmic security and acceptance" *is* possible in this life—but through faith, not evidence, and as a gift, not an achievement. Hence, one who adopts a theology of hope need not forego "a sense of cosmic security and the certainty of orthodox Christian claims" (144). To be sure, an adequate theology may take away these things insofar as they are in the mode of certain knowledge or evidential belief, but God can give them back in the mode of faith. When God does, the astute person of faith is no more subject to smugness or presumption than is the mere hoper, and both types of person have an equal obligation upon them to lead a life of faithfulness in a world of uncertainties, dangers, threats, and temptations.

In closing I note that Thomas Aquinas pointed out that Christian hope is the golden mean between salvific despair and salvific presumption. Christian faith, I suggest, is the golden mean between epistemic despair and epistemic presumption. Faith-filled Christians should through reason be as confident that they should not be apodictic as to the truth of what they see through the

dark glass of faith as they are confident through faith that they see something wonderful. In hope that what they seem to see is what they see, faith-filled Christians should cherish their faith, find joy in it, and live according to it.²⁴

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NOTES

1. James L. Muyskens, *The Sufficiency of Hope: The Conceptual Foundations of Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979). The page numbers for quotations from *Sufficiency* will be placed in parentheses in the text.

2. Similarly, I am sympathetic to much of what Louis Pojman has said about religious hope, but I disagree even more strongly with what he says about religious faith than with what Muyskens says. Muyskens has a firm distinction between faith and hope, whereas Pojman identifies them with one another. His stated objective in "Faith Without Belief?" is to "develop a concept of faith as hope," rather than as propositional belief. The problem with this is that there is as profound a difference between religious hope and religious faith as there is between religious belief and religious hope (and between religious belief and religious faith). Hence, whereas Pojman's article advances our understanding of religious hope, it interferes with our understanding of religious faith and our sense of the distinctions between noetic, volitional, and emotive states, e.g., belief, actional faith (fidelity), and passionial faith (non-evidential confidence), respectively. (In an unpublished paper, "The Gift of Faith," I discuss the fact that sometimes "faith" is used to refer to a passion and sometimes to an action.)

Failure to see the distinction between faith (which is non-evidentially based) and belief (which is evidentially based) led Pojman to think that Blaise Pascal was recommending something epistemically degenerate when he recommended to would-be 'believers' that performing the external rituals of religion, such as going to Mass, kneeling, using holy water, etc., could occasion the acquisition of faith. Pascal's *Pensées* show that he was familiar with the distinction between faith as a passion, i.e., as something that happens to one, and evidential belief (he was the founder of modern probability theory), and between epistemically deluded faith and epistemically astute faith. It seems clear that he was urging religious practice as a means to receipt of the latter, i.e., astute faith, and not as a way for us, as Pojman puts it, "to get [ourselves] to believe what [we] don't believe by an impartial look at the evidence" (172). See Pojman's "Faith Without Belief?" in *Faith and Philosophy* (3/2), April '86, 157-176.

3. *Sufficiency*, 113. This depiction of the life of faith and the life of hope as being mutually exclusive permeates 134-44 also.

4. In "The Virtue of Faith," *Faith and Philosophy*, 1/1 (Jan. '84), 3-15, Robert Adams conceptualizes faith along lines similar to my own. He writes: "The certitude of faith has much more to do with confidence, or freedom from fear, which is partly an emotional state, than it has to do with judgments of certainty or great probability in any evidential sense" (10). Yet there is also a deep difference. My focus is on faith as emotional confidence in the truth of a proposition. Adams' focus is on faith as emotional trust which

issues in appropriate, fearless actions. He does a disturbingly good job of showing how weakness of faith can be an expression of sinfulness. However, I think that the fear that sometimes causes us to flinch in the face of religious hardships is not always sinful and is not entirely escapable because no matter how deep our faith in the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, those of us who do not know for certain that God exists know that God may not exist and that, therefore, our religious actions may be frustrated or punished not because God is not good or trustworthy but because he does not exist.

5. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae.17, 7.

6. Note that Muyskens' claim is that hope is a sufficient *foundation* for an authentic religious life. He is not saying that hope is a sufficient *condition* of an authentic religious life. For a religious life which is based on hope to be complete, it must combine hope with faithfulness, i.e., with disciplined devotion to the one whom or that which one hopes exists, e.g., Christ or Brahman.

7. John Paul Heil takes Aquinas' position because he finds it also to be St. Paul's position. See his *Romans—Paul's Letter of Hope* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1987). There he says the following about the dynamic relations of faith and hope. "The first element [in the dynamics of biblical hope] is 'what God has promised and/or already accomplished on our behalf.' This element might be termed the objective basis or foundation from God for hope. It provides the possibility to hope for God's future salvific activity. This element thus serves as the basis or 'promise' for God's future salvific activity or its completion in the future. The second element is 'faith.' The element of faith, then, might be termed the subjective basis or presupposition of hope. And so hope can be considered a consequence of faith" (6).

It is then, according to Heil, faith in what God has accomplished in Christ that makes it possible for one to hope that one will be a personal beneficiary of that divine accomplishment. I appreciate Heil's point but think it is too strong. Someone who encounters the Gospel and does not have faith that it is true, and therefore cannot hope for salvation on the basis of faith, can, nonetheless, hope that the Gospel is true and that, if it is true, she will be saved by Christ.

8. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility that a gift of faith can bring its own propositional content and not merely be an affirmation of something that one hoped for prior to faith.

9. In "Agatheism," *Faith and Philosophy*, 10/1 (Jan. '93), 33-48, I argue that a justification of religious hope must proceed in terms of axiological, not evidential, considerations.

10. The distinction between faithfulness, on the one hand, and faith and hope, on the other hand, is very important. Merely to hope that God exists is, obviously, not to live a life of faithfulness; but neither is it the case that merely to have faith that God exists is to live a life of faithfulness. Faithfulness is a species of action; hope and faith are species of passion, the former of desire and the latter of conviction (or of 'belief'—used in its generic, non-modal sense of thinking that something is the case, but without regard to whether what one holds to be the case is held on a non-evidential basis or on an evidential basis).

11. In *Sufficiency* Muyskens notes that in addition to people using "believe" to refer to propositions about which they are certain, "There is a use of 'believe' in which it is used as a retreat from certainty: 'Well, I'm not certain that *p*, but I do believe that *p*. I should

be surprised if not-*p*'; or, 'I guess that I don't *know* that *p* but I believe that *p*'" (152). Given Muyskens' clear grasp of this distinction between knowing and believing, it seems clear that in his statement, "a life of faith would not be possible if we were certain that God does *not* exist or if we believed that He does not," he is not simply repeating himself in those two hypothetical clauses. Rather, he is saying both that a life of faith would not be possible if we were certain that God does not exist and that a life of faith would not be possible if we were not certain that God did not exist but believed that he did not. My contention is that he is right that the first antecedent excludes the possibility of a life of faith, but he is wrong to say that the second antecedent is incompatible with a life of faith. One might believe that God does not exist yet have faith that God does.

12. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1948, 1976), p. 176.

13. *Pilgrim Hymnal* (The Pilgrim Press, 1958).

14. One's vision of God's kingdom can be nested in faith without hope, or in hope without faith, or in both hope and faith. The role of vision in religious *hope* is articulated nicely by Stewart Sutherland in his article "Hope" in *The Philosophy in Christianity*, ed. Godfrey Vesey (Cambridge University Press, 1989), 193-206. Sutherland portrays religious hope as "a moral vision of what might be" (200). Such hope, he adds, "is a basis for the critical evaluation of our world, rather than a flight from it" (201).

15. The relation between faith and religious experience is complex and subtle. One can have a purely propositional faith that there is a supremely perfect being, i.e., one can have a non-evidential conviction of the existence of God which is not grounded in a mystical or religious experience—just as one could have faith that there is life on other planets without feeling that one has had an experience of the presence of or communication from an extraterrestrial being. A conviction that God exists which is grounded in a religious experience is of the nature of faith, I think, if the individual's conviction is not generated by an evidential relation to that experience, i.e., if the experience just seems to be an experience of a supremely perfect being, so it is not the case that the person has the experience and then, as a result of reflection on it, concludes that a supremely perfect being exists. The person's faith is that the experience is veridical.

Propositional faith can, then, (1) be subsequent to a religious experience (in which case faith succeeds the religious experience and may even be caused by it but is not evidentially grounded on it), or it can (2) be grounded in a religious experience (in which case faith and religious experience arise together and support one another but are not evidentially related), or faith can (3) give rise to religious experience—or, perhaps better, to experiencing religiously (in which case religious faith causes one to see and feel oneself, others, history and/or the universe in a new and spiritual way).

The posture of faith in God typically consists of trust in the goodness, wisdom, and power of a God whom one thinks exists. Hence, faith in God is a richer phenomenon than is mere faith that God exists. As we saw earlier, we must not confuse mere propositional faith that there is a God with a feeling of the presence and grace of God—which is a matter of experiencing, or at least seeming to experience, the presence and grace of an actual person. Obviously, such experience is more to be desired than mere propositional faith that God exists. Faith grounded in religious experience is faith that what one seems to be experiencing is what one is experiencing.

16. Alan Wood has said in criticism of Muyskens' position regarding the sufficiency of religious hope that religious hope is "a drastic watering down of what 'faith' has traditionally meant" and is "a very pale thing compared with what religious people have meant by faith." I do not think that Wood has appreciated the rich and profound possibilities of religious hope, but I agree with the thrust of his statements insofar as their intent is to disagree with Muyskens' suggestion that religious hope is a satisfactory substitute for religious faith. I thank Prof. Wood for personal correspondence on these points and for permission to quote him.

17. Perhaps in this life the analogue to veridical religious experience, in contrast to purely propositional religious faith, would be actually seeing one's beloved sibling briefly in a way that leaves no doubt in one's mind that it was one's sibling but in such a way that one realizes intellectually that one could have been mistaken due to poor lighting, slight differences in physical features, and such brief exposure.

18. Hope is human; faith is divine. Faith in Christ is a divine gift. Faithfulness to Christ is a human activity. Such faithfulness is the appropriate response to the gift of faith—though even then we need the additional gift of divine grace to help us in our efforts to live faithfully. I develop these points more fully in an unpublished paper, "The Gift of Faith."

19. I think with regard to metaphysical propositions, such as "God exists," it would be viciously circular to argue that faith that *p* is evidence that *p*.

20. Muyskens does an excellent job of distinguishing religious hope from evidential optimism, but he does not seem to see that whereas positive religious faith is a species of optimism, it is not a species of evidential optimism, and therefore it does not (or at least should not) share the intellectual confidence of evidential optimism. On hope and optimism, see *Sufficiency*, 27-35.

21. However, just as hope can be accompanied by faith, perhaps faith can be accompanied by belief, i.e., by a good evidential case for its contents. I do not mean to rule out this possibility. My concern is that we should not allow the concepts of faith and belief to be muddled together. Nor should we allow anyone to think that the dignity of faith resides in evidential support or to mistake the confidence of faith for the confidence of belief. If we want the confidence of belief regarding religious propositions, we must *ante* up what we take to be sufficient evidence, as have, for example, Richard Swinburne in *The Existence of God* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1979) and the nine contributors, mostly natural scientists, to *Evidence for Faith*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Dallas: Probe Books, 1991).

22. The concept of faith as a gift from God seems clearly contained in the Bible, and especially in the New Testament. See, e.g., Acts 15:9, Acts 18:27, Rom. 12:3, I Cor. 12:9, Gal. 5:22 (preferably the Greek), Eph. 2:8, and Hebrews 11:1. Also, in the Oxford Annotated Bible, RSV (NY: Oxford University Press, 1962), the gloss on John 6:64-65 says, "These truths can be discerned only by faith, which is God's gift, not man's achievement (Eph. 2:8)." The very next gloss, on verses 66-71, presumes the idea of faith as a gift to which we are called to respond. The commentator says, "To receive God's gift of faith is to *know* God in Christ; to refuse it is to become an ally of the *devil*." The idea is right, but the wording seems misleading. A libertarian theist should say that whether we *receive* the gift of faith is up to God, not us, but whether we *accept* the gift of faith or

refuse it, whether we *cherish* it or *ignore* it, is up to us. To cherish it and act upon it is not merely to have faith; it is to be faithful.

For an intriguingly relevant statement in the Old Testament, see Isaiah 32:17. There Isaiah tells the Israelites that after a bleak era, the Spirit will be poured over them from on high, bringing about righteousness, one result of which will be “quietness and confidence for ever” (New English Bible).

23. Such faith may be purely propositional, but it need not be. Propositional faith that one is loved by God might be caused by or grounded in an experience of the presence and love of God, but it need not be. When it is not, presumably even purely propositional faith that one is forgiven and loved by God would *cause* feelings of peace or joy. Still, the peace and joy caused by a purely propositional conviction that one is loved by God should not be confused with an experience of God’s love being, as St. Paul put it, “poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” In light of this point, I modify an earlier point as follows: hope is water; faith is grape juice; religious experience is wine.

24. Because what Christians see through faith seems to them to be good news for everyone, they share its substance with non-Christians, encourage them to evaluate it, and, if they agree to its goodness, invite them to join in Christian hope and pray for faith of their own; i.e., they invite them to pray for personal faith in the corporate faith of the Church—and they join them in that prayer.